UPHOLSTERER
Act 2. Sc. 5.

5.

THE UPHOLSTERER.

A FARCE,

IN TWO ACTS.

WRITTEN BY ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

The Lines distinguished by inverted Commas, are omitted in the Representation.

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The Upholsterer.

WITH a success, brilliant as its merit, the Upholdsterer of Mr Murphy was first performed, in the year 1758, for the benefit of Mr. Mossop, at Drury Lane Theatre.

The rage for inveighing against government; for predicting imaginary dangers; for abusing ministry; and for darkening the characters of those high in office with the deepest shades of calumny; was equally strong among the ignorant, and the prejudiced, as at the present moment; when government has thought proper to interfere, in the hope of crushing an evil, which might otherwise endanger national tranquility, and eventually wound a constitution formed upon the best and noblest principles.

The parlour of every pot-house, at the time this piece came out, had its chair of authority; in which some distinguished orator took his nightly seat, and from thence dealt forth the lie of the day to a gaping auditory, composed of mechanics and tradesmen, who gave up domestic welfare and repose, to commence politicians, amidst the fumes of punch, porter, and tobacco; without a plentiful supply of which, self-importance would not have been wound up to its proper pitch, needful to support the dignity of the society.

Ridicule, in many instances, has been allowed to act more powerfully than advice; and few, however callous to the lectures of private friendship, can stand against the "world's dread "laugh." The Upholsterer drew full houses; the satire it was charged with performed its wholesome office, to the comfort and happiness of the wives, daughters, and dependants of many an honest and well meaning tradesman; who repaired to the theatre to view his own image, took shame to himself, and devoted that time to the interests of his family, which he had been in the habit of wasting amidst inebriation, confused notions, flimsey argument, and false doctrines.

Dramatis Personae.

COVENT-GARDEN.

Men.

Quidnunc,	-	Mr. Munden
Pamphlet,	-	Mr. Wilson
Razor,	-	Mr. Quick
Rovewell,	-	Mr. Davies
Belmour,	-	Mr. Macready
Feeble,	-	Mr. Powell
Watchman,	-	Mr. Thomson.

Women.

Harriet,	-	Miss Chapman
Termagant,	-	Mrs. Mattocks
Maid to Feeble,	-	Miss Stuart.

PROLOGUE.

WHEN first, in falling Greece's evil hour,
Ambition aim'd at universal power;
When the fierce man of Macedon began
Of a new monarchy to form the plan,
Each Greek (as famed Demostenes relates)
Politically mad!——wou'd rave of states!
And help to form, where'er the mob could meet,
An Areopagus in every street.
What news, what news? was their eternal cry:
Is Philip sick!——then soar'd their spirits high;—
Philip is well!——dejection in each eye.
Athenian coblers join'd in deep debate,
While gold in secret undermin'd the state;
Till Wisdom's bird the vulture's prey was made,
And the sword gleam'd in Academus' shade.
Now Modern Philips threaten this our land,
What say Britannia's sons? along the Strand
What news? ye cry—with the same passion smit;
And there at least you rival Attic wit.
A parliament of porters here shall muse
On state affairs——"swall'wing a taylor's news;"
For *ways* and *means* no starv'd projector sleeps;
And every shop some mighty statesman keeps:
He Britain's foes, like Bobadil, can kill;
Supply th' Exchequer, and neglects his till.

PROLOGUE.

In every ale-house legislators meet;
And patriots settle kingdoms in the Fleet.
To show this phrenzy in its genuine light,
A modern news-monger appears to night:
Trick'd out from Addison's accomplish'd page,
Behold th' Upholsterer ascends the stage.
No minister such trials e'er hath stood;
He turns a *bankrupt* for the public good!
Undone himself, yet full of England's glory!
A politician—neither Whig nor Tory.
Nor can ye high or low the Quixote call;
"He's knight o' th' shire, and represents ye all."
As for the bard——to you he yields his plan;
For well he knows, you're candid where you can.
One only praise he claims——no party-stroke
Here turns a public character to joke,
His *Panacæa* is for all degrees,
For all have more or less of this disease:
Whatever his success, of this he's sure,
There's merit ev'n to attempt the cure.

THE UPHOLSTERER.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—BELMOUR'S *Lodging*.

'*Enter* BELMOUR *beating* BRISK.

'*Brisk*.

'MR. Belmour!—Let me die, Sir—as I hope to 'be sav'd, Sir—

'*Bel*. Sirrah! Rogue! Villain!—I'll teach you; 'I will, you rascal, to speak irreverently of her I 'love.

'*Br*. As I am a sinner, Sir, I only meant—

'*Bel*. Only meant! You could not mean it, jacka-'napes—you had no meaning, booby. ——

'*Br*. Why, no, Sir—that's the very thing, Sir—I 'had no meaning.

'*Bel*. Then, Sirrah, I'll make you know your 'meaning for the future.

'*Br*. Yes, Sir—to be sure, Sir;—and yet upon 'my word, if you would be but a little cool, Sir, 'you'd find I'm not much to blame.—Besides, mas-

'ter, you can't conceive the good it would do your 'health, if you will but keep your temper a little.

'*Bel.* Mighty well, Sir, give your advice.

'*Br.* Why, really now, this same love hath meta-'morphosed us both very strangely, master:—for, 'to be free, here have we been at this work these 'six weeks,—stark-staring mad in love with a cou-'ple of baggages not worth a groat;—and yet, heav'n 'help us! they have as much pride as comes to the 'share of a lady of quality before she has been 'caught in the fact with a handsome young fellow, '—or indeed after she has been caught, for that mat-'ter.——

'*Bel.* You won't have done, rascal—

'*Br.* In short, my young mistress and her maid 'have as much pride and poverty as—as—no mat-'ter what; they have the devil and all—when at 'the same time every body knows the old broken 'upholsterer, Miss Harriet's father, might give us 'all he has in the world, and not eat the worse pud-'ding on a Sunday for it.

'*Bel.* Impious, execrable atheist! What! detract 'from Heav'n? I'll reform your notions, I will, 'you saucy— [*Beats him.*

'*Br.* Nay, but my dear Sir—a little patience—'not so hard—'

Enter ROVEWELL, *and* BELMOUR, *meeting.*

Rove. Belmour, your servant—'What, at logger-'heads with my old friend Brisk?'

'*Bel.* Confusion!—Mr. Rovewell, your servant—'this is your doing, hang-dog.'—Jack Rovewell, I am glad to see thee.——

'*Rove.* Brisk used to be a good servant—he has 'not been tampering with any of his master's girls, 'has he?

'*Bel.* Do you know, Rovewell, that he has had 'the impudence to talk detractingly and profanely 'of my mistress?—

'*Br.* For which, Sir, I have suffered unhumanly 'and most unchristian-like, I assure you.

'*Bel.* Will you leave prating, booby?

'*Rove.* Well but, Belmour, where does she live? 'I'm but just arrived, you know, and I'll go and 'beat up her quarters.—

'*Bel. (Half aside.)* Beat up her quarters!—

[*Looks at him smilingly, then half aside.*

'Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
'Oft she rejects, but never once offends.

[*Stands musing.*

'*Rove.* Hey! what fallen into a reverie!—Prithee, 'Brisk, what does all this mean?

'*Br.* Why, Sir, you must know—I am over head 'and ears in love.—

'*Rove.* But I mean your master; what ails him?

'*Br.* That's the very thing I'm going to tell you, 'Sir—As I said, Sir—I am over head and ears in 'love with a whimsical queer kind of a piece here 'in the neighbourhood; and so nothing can serve 'my master, but he must fall in love with the mistress '—Look at him now, Sir—

'*Belmour continues musing and muttering to himself.*

'*Rove.* Ha, ha, ha!—Poor Belmour, I pity thee 'with all my heart— [*Strikes him on the shoulder.*

'Ye gods, annihilate both space and time,—
'And make two lovers happy.

'*Bel.* My dear Rovewell, such a girl!—Ten 'thousand cupids play about her mouth, you 'rogue.——

'*Rove.* Ten thousand pounds had better play 'about her pocket.—What fortune has she?

'*Br.* Heaven help us, not much to crack of.——

'*Bel.* Not much to crack of, Mr. Brazen!— 'Prithee, Rovewell, how can you be so ungenerous 'as to ask such a question? You know I don't mind 'fortune; though by the way she has an uncle who 'is determined to settle very handsomely upon her, 'and on the strength of that does she give herself in- 'numerable airs.

'*Rove.* Fortune not to be minded!—I'll tell you 'what, Belmour, though you have a good one al- 'ready, there's no kind of inconvenience in a little 'more.—I'm sure if I had not minded fortune, I 'might have been in Jamaica still, not worth a su- 'gar-cane; but the widow Molosses took a fancy to 'me—Heav'n or a worse destiny, has taken a fancy 'to her; and so, after ten years exile, and being 'turn'd a-drift by my father, here am I again, a 'warm planter, and a widower, most wofully tired 'of matrimony.—But,' my dear Belmour, we were both so overjoy'd to meet one another yesterday evening, just as I arrived in town, that I did not hear a syllable from you of your love-fit. How, when, and where, did this happen?

Bel. Oh, by the most fortunate accident that ever

was—I'll tell thee, Rovewell—I was going one night from the tavern about six weeks ago—I had been there with a parcel of blades, whose only joy is center'd in their bottle; and 'faith, till this accident, I was no better myself—but ever since I am grown quite a new man.

Rove. Ay, a new man indeed!—Who in the name of wonder would take thee, sunk as thou art, into a musing, moaping, melancholy lover, for the gay Charles Belmour, whom I knew in the West-Indies?

Bel. Poh! that is not to be mentioned.—You know my father took me against my will from the university, and consigned me over to the academic discipline of a man of war; so that, to prevent a dejection of spirits, I was obliged to run into the opposite extreme—as you yourself were wont to do.

Rove. Why, yes, I had my moments of reflection, and was glad to dissipate them——You know I always told you there was something extraordinary in my story; and so there is still: I suppose it must be cleared up in a few days now—I'm in no hurry about it though: I must see the town a little this evening, and have my frolic first. But to the point, Belmour—you was going from the tavern, you say.—

Bel. Yes, Sir, about two in the morning; and I perceived an unusual blaze in the air—I was in a rambling humour, and so resolved to know what it was.

'*Br.* I and my master went together, Sir—'

'*Bel.* Oh, Rovewell! my better stars ordain'd it to light me on to happiness.——By sure attraction

led, I came to the very street where a house was on fire; water-engines playing, flames ascending, all hurry, confusion, and distress! when on a sudden the voice of despair, silver sweet, came thrilling down to my very heart.—Poor dear, little soul, what can she do! cried the neighbours. Again she scream'd; the fire gathering force, and gaining upon her every instant.—Here, Ma'am, said I, leap into my arms, I'll be sure to receive you.—And wou'd you think it?—down she came—my dear Rovewell, such a girl! I caught her in my arms, you rogue, safe, without harm.—The dear naked Venus just risen from her bed, my boy—her slender waist, Rovewell, the downy smoothness of her whole person, and her limbs "harmonious, swell'n by nature's softest hand.'

Rove. Raptures and paradise!—What seraglio in Covent Garden did you carry her to?

Bel. 'There again now!' Do, prithee, correct your way of thinking: 'take a *quantum sufficit* of 'virtuous love, and purify your ideas.' Her lovely bashfulness, her delicate fears,—her beauty heighten'd and endear'd by distress, dispers'd my wildest thoughts, and melted me into tenderness and respect.

Rove. But, Belmour, surely she has not the impudence to be modest after you have had possession of her person.—

Bel. My views are honourable, I assure you, Sir; but her father is so absurdly positive——The man's distracted about the balance of power, and will give

'his daughter to none but a politician,—When there 'was an execution in his house, he thought of no-'thing but the camp at Pyrna; and, now he's a 'bankrupt, his head runs upon the ways and means, 'and schemes for paying off the national debt: the 'affairs of Europe engross all his attention, while 'the distresses of his lovely daughter pass unnotic-'ed.'

Rove. Ridiculous enough!—But why do you mind him? Why don't you go to bed to the wench at once?——Take her into keeping, man.

Bel. How can you talk so affrontingly of her?—Have not I told you, tho' her father is ruin'd, still she has great expectancies from a rich relation?

Rove. Then what do you stand watering at the mouth for? If she is to have money enough to pay for her china, her gaming-debts, her dogs, and her monkeys, marry her then, if you needs must be ensnar'd; be in a fool's paradise for a honey-moon; then come to yourself, wonder at what you've done, and mix with honest fellows again:—Carry her off, I say, and never stand whining for the father's consent.

Bel. Carry her off!—I like the scheme—Will you assist me?

Rove. No, no; there I beg to be excus'd. Don't 'you remember what the satyrist says—" Never 'marry while there's a halter to be had for money, 'or a bridge to afford a convenient leap.'

'*Bel.* Prithee leave fooling.

'*Rove.* I am in serious earnest, I assure you;' I'll drink with you, game with you, go into any scheme

or frolic with you, but 'ware matrimony.—Nay, if you come to the tavern this evening, I'll drink your mistress's health in a bumper; but as to your conjugal scheme, I'll have nothing to do with that business positively.

Bel. Well, well, I'll take you at your word, and meet you at ten exactly, at the same place we were at last night; then and there I'll let you know what further measures I've concerted.

Rove. 'Till then, farewell; a-pro-pos—do you that I've seen none of my relations yet?

Bel. Time enough to-morrow.

Rove. Ay, ay, to-morrow will do—Well, your servant.

Bel. Lovewell, yours. [*Exit.*] 'See the gentleman down stairs—and, d'ye hear, come to me in 'my study that I may give you a letter to Harriet. 'And hark ye, Sir—be sure you see Harriet herself; 'and let me have no messages from that officious 'go between, her Mrs. Slipslop of a maid, with her 'unintelligible jargon of hard words, of which she 'neither knows the meaning nor pronunciation—— '[*Exit Brisk.*] I'll write to her this moment, acquaint her with the soft tumult of my desires, and 'if possible, make her mine own this very night.

[*Exit repeating.*

'Love first taught letters for some wretch's aid,
'Some banish'd lover, or some captive maid.—'

SCENE II. *The Upholsterer's House.*

Enter HARRIET *and* TERMAGANT.

Ter. Well, but, Ma'am, he has made love to you six weeks successively; he has been as constant in his moors, poor gentleman, as if you had the subversion of 'state to settle upon him—and if he slips thro' your fingers now, Ma'am, you have nobody to depute it to but yourself.

Har. Lard, Termagant, how you run on!—I tell you again and again, my pride was touched, because he seemed to presume on his opulence and my father's distresses.

Ter. La, Miss Harriet, how can you be so paradropsical in your 'pinions?

Har. Well, but you know, though my father's affairs are ruin'd, I am not in so desperate a way; consider my uncle's fortune is no trifle, and I think that prospect entitles me to give myself a few airs before I resign my person.

Ter. I grant ye, Ma'am, you have a very good pretensions; but then it's waiting for dead mens shoes: I'll venture to be perjur'd Mr. Bellmour never disclaim'd an idear of your father's distress.

Har. Supposing that.

Ter. Suppose, Ma'am—I know it disputably to be so.

Har. Indisputably, I guess, you mean;——but I'm tired of wrangling with you about words.

Ter. By my troth, you're in the right on't—there's

ne'er a she in all Old England (as your father calls it) is mistress of such phisiology, as I am. Incertain I am, as how you does not know nobody that puts their words together with such a curacy as myself. I once lived with a mistus, Ma'am—Mistus!—She was a lady—a great brewer's wife—and she wore as fine cloaths as any person of quality, let her get up as early as she will—and she used to call me—Termagant, says she—what's the figrification of such a word—and I always told her——I told her the importation of all my words; though I could not help laughing, Miss Harriet, to see so fine a lady such a downright ignoranimus.

Har. Well—but pray now, Termagant, would you have me, directly upon being asked the question, throw myself into the arms of a man?

Ter. O' my conscience you did throw yourself into his arms with scarce a shift on, that's what you did.

Har. Yes; but that was a leap in the dark, when there was no time to think of it.

Ter. Well, it does not signify argifying, I wish we were both warm in bed; you with Mr. Belmour, and I with his coxcomb of a man; instead of being manured here with an old crazy fool—axing your pardon, Ma'am, for calling your father so—but he is a fool, and the worst of fools, with his policies—when his house is full of statues of bangcressy.

Har. 'Tis too true, Termagant—yet he's my father still, and I can't help loving him.

Ter. Fiddle faddle—love him!—He's an anecdote against love.

Har. Hush! here he comes!———

Ter. No, 'tis your uncle, Feeble; poor gentleman I pities him, eaten up with infirmaries, to be taking such pains with a madman.

Enter FEEBLE.

Har. Well, uncle, have you been able to console him?

Feeb. He wants no consolation, child—Lack-a-day—I'm so infirm I can hardly move.—I found him tracing in the map prince Charles Lorraine's passage over the Rhine, and comparing it with Julius Cæsar's.

Ter. An old blockhead—I've no patience with him, with his fellows coming after him every hour in the day with news. Well now, I wishes there was no such thing as a newspaper in the world, with such a pack of lies, and such a deal of jab-jab every day.

Feeb. Ay, there were three or four shabby fellows with him when I went into his room—I can't get him to think of appearing before the commissioners to-morrow, to disclose his effects; but I'll send my neighbour counsellor Codicil to him—Don't be dejected, Harriet; my poor sister, your mother, was a good woman: I love you for her sake, child, and all I am worth shall be yours—But I must be going—I find myself but very ill; good night, Harriet, good night. [*Exit Feeble.*

Har. You'll give me leave to see you to the door, Sir. [*Exit Harriet.*

Ter. O' my conscience, this master of mine within here might have pick'd up his crumbs as well as Mr. Feeble, if he had any idear of his business; I'm sure, if I had not hopes from Mr. Feeble, I should not tarry in this house—By my troth, if all who have nothing to say to the 'fairs of the nation would mind their own business, and those who should take care of our 'fairs would mind their business too, I fancy poor Old England (as they call it) would fare the better among 'em—This old crazy pate within here—playing the fool—when the man is past his grand clytemnester. [*Exit Termagant.*

SCENE III. *Discovers* QUIDNUNC *at a Table with Newspapers, Pamphlets, &c. all around him.*

Quid. Six and three is nine—seven and four is eleven, and carry one—let me see, 126 million—199 thousand 328—and all this with about—where, where's the amount of the specie? Here, here—with about 15 million in specie, all this great circulation! good, good—Why then, how are we ruined?—how are we ruined? What says the land-tax at 4 shillings in the pound? two million: now where's my new assessment?—here—here—the 5th part of twenty; 5 in 2 I can't, but 5 in 20 *(pauses)* right, 4 times—why then, upon my new assessment there's 4 million—how are we ruined?—What says malt, cyder, and mum?—eleven and carry 1, nought and go 2—good, good; malt, hops, cyder, and mum. Then there's the wine-licence, and the gin-act—The gin-act is no bad article—if the people will shoot fire down their

throats, why, in a Christian country, they should pay as much as possible for suicide—Salt, good—sugar, very good—Window-lights—good again!—Stamp-duty, that's not so well—it will have a bad effect upon the newspapers, and we shan't have enough of politics—But there's the lottery—where's my new scheme for a lottery?—here it is—Now for the amount of the whole—how are we ruin'd? 7 and carry nought—nought and carry 1—

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. Sir, Sir—

Quid. Hold your tongue, you baggage, you'll put me out—Nought and carry 1.

Ter. Counsellor Codicil will be with you presently—

Quid. Prithee be quiet, woman——How are we ruined?

Ter. Ay, I'm confidous as how you may thank yourself for your own ruination.

Quid. Ruin the nation!—hold your tongue, you jade, I'm raising the supplies within the year——How many did I carry?

Ter. Yes, you've carried your pigs to a fine market.—

Quid. Get out of the room, hussey—you trollop, get out of the room.— [*Turning her out.*

Enter RAZOR, *with suds on his hands*, &c.

Quid. Friend Razor, I'm glad to see thee—Well, hast got any news?

Raz. A budget! I left a gentleman half-shav'd in my shop over the way; it came into my head of a sudden, so I could not be at ease till I told you.—

Quid. That's kind, that's kind, friend Razor—never mind the gentleman; he can wait.

Raz. Yes, so he can; he can wait.

Quid. Come, now let's hear, what is't?

Raz. I shav'd a great man's butler to-day.—

Quid. Did ye?

Raz. I did.

Quid. Aye!

Raz. Very true. [*Both shake their heads.*

Quid. What did he say?

Raz. Nothing.

Quid. Hum—How did he look?

Raz. Full of thought.

Quid. Aye! full of thought—what can that mean?

Raz. It must mean something.

[*Staring at each other.*

Quid. Mayhap somebody may be going out of place.

Raz. Like enough—there's something at the bottom when a great man's butler looks grave; things can't hold out in this manner, Master Quidnunc!—Kingdoms rise and fall!—Luxury will be the ruin of us all, it will indeed. [*Stares at him.*

Quid. Pray, now friend Razor, do you find business as current now as before the war?

Raz. No, no, I have not made a wig the Lord knows when, I can't mind it for thinking of my poor country.

Quid. That's generous, friend Razor—

Raz. Yes, I can't gi' my mind to any thing for thinking of my country; and when I was in Bedlam, it was the same? I cou'd think of nothing else in Bedlam, but poor old England, and so they said as how I was incurable for it.

Quid. S'bodikins! they might as well say the same of me.

Raz. So they might—Well, your servant, Mr. Quidnunc; I'll go now and shave the rest of the gentleman's face—Poor old England!

[*Sighs and shakes his head. Going.*

Quid. But hark ye, friend Razor, ask the gentleman if he has got any news.—

Raz. I will, I will.

Quid. And, d'ye hear, come and tell me if he has.

Raz. I will, I will—poor old England!—(*Going, returns.*)—O, Mr. Quidnunc, I want to ask you—pray now—

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. Gemini! gemini!—How can a man have so little difference for his customers—

Quid. I tell you, Mrs. Malapert——

Ter. And I tell you, the gentleman keeps such a bawling yonder;—for shame, Mr. Razor—you'll be a bankrupper like my master, with such a house full of children as you have, pretty little things—that's what you will.

Raz I'm a-coming, I'm a-coming, Mrs. Termagant—I say, Mr. Quidnunc, I can't sleep in my bed

for thinking what will come of the Protestants, if the Papists should get the better in the present war—

Quid. I'll tell you—the geographer of our coffee-house was saying the other day, that there is an huge tract of land about the pole, where the Protestants may retire; and that the Papists will never be able to beat 'em thence, if the northern powers hold together, and the Grand Turk make a diversion in their favour.

Raz. (laughs.) That makes me easy—I'm glad the Protestants will know where to go, if the Papists shou'd get the better. *(Going, returns.)* Oh! Mr. Quidnunc—hark ye—India bonds are risen.

Quid. Are they!—how much?

Raz. A Jew pedlar said in my shop as how they are risen three-sixteenths—

Quid. Why then, that makes some amends for the price of corn.

Raz. So it does, so it does—Good-bye, Mr. Quidnunc—I'm so glad the poor Protestants know where to go; 'I shall then have a night's rest may-hap.' [*Exit Razor, laughing.*

Quid. I shall never be rightly easy till those careening wharfs at Gibraltar are repaired—

Ter. Fiddle for your dwarfs; impair your ruin'd fortune, do that.

'*Quid.* If only one ship can heave down at a time, 'there will be no end of it—and then, why should 'watering be so tedious there?

'*Ter.* Look where you're daughter comes, and

'yet you'll be ruinating about Give-a-halter,——
'while that poor thing is breaking her heart.'

Enter HARRIET.

Quid. It is one comfort, however, they can always have fresh provisions in the Mediterranean.

Har. Dear Papa, what's the Mediterranean to people in our situation!

Quid. The Mediterranean, child?—Why if we should lose the Mediterranean, we're all undone.

Har. Dear Sir, that's our misfortune—we are undone already.

Quid. No, no—here, here, child—I have raised the supplies within the year.

Ter. I tell you, you're a lunadic man.

Quid. Yes, yes, I'm a lunatic to be sure——I tell you, Harriet, I have saved a great deal out of my affairs for you—

Har. For Heav'n's sake, Sir, don't do that—you must give up every thing; my uncle Feeble's lawyer will be here to talk with you about it—

Quid. Poh, poh, I tell you I know what I am about—you shall have my books and pamphlets, and all the manifesto's of the powers at war.

Har. And so make me a politician, Sir?

Quid. It would be the pride of my heart to find I had got a politician in petticoats—a female Machiavel!—'Sbodikins, you might then know as much as most people that talk in coffee-houses; and who knows but in time you might be a maid of honour, or sweeper of the mall, or—

Har. Dear Sir, don't I see what you have got by politics?

Quid. Psha! my country's of more consequence to me: and let me tell you, you can't think too much of your country in these worst of times;—for Mr. Monitor has told us, that affairs in the north, and the Protestant interest, begin to grow ticklish.

Ter. And your daughter's affairs are very ticklish too, I'm sure.

'*Har.* Prythee, Termagant—

'*Ter.* I must speak to him—I know you are in a 'ticklish situation, Ma'am.'

Quid. I tell you, Trull—

Ter. But I am convicted it is so—and the posture of my affairs is very ticklish too—and so I imprecate that Mr. Belmour would come, and—

Quid. Mr. Belmour come! I tell you, Mrs. Saucebox, that my daughter shall never be married to a man that has not better notions of the balance of power.

Ter. But what purvision will you make for her now, with your balances?

Quid. There again now!—Why, do you think I don't know what I'm about?—I'll look in the papers for a match for you, child—there's often good matches advertised in the papers—Evil betide it—evil betide it!—I once thought to have struck a great stroke, that would have astonished all Europe—I thought to have married my daughter to Theodore king of Corsica—

Har. What, and have me perish in a jail, Sir?

Quid. 'Sbodikins, my daughter would have had her coronation-day;—I should have been allied to a crown'd head, and been first lord of the treasury of Corsica!—But come—now I'll go and talk over the London Evening, till the Gazette comes in—I shan't sleep to-night, unless I see the Gazette.

'*Enter* CODICIL.

'*Cod.* Mr. Quidnunc, your servant—The door 'was open, and I entered upon the premises—I'm 'just come from the hall.

'*Quid.* 'Sbodikins this man is now come to keep 'me at home.

'*Cod.* Upon my word, Miss Harriet's a very 'pretty young lady; as pretty a young lady as one 'would desire to have and to hold. Ma'am, your 'most obedient: I have drawn my friend Feeble's 'will, in which you have all his goods and chattels, 'lands, and hereditaments.

'*Har.* I thank you, Sir, for the information—

'*Cod.* And I hope soon to draw your marriage-'settlement for my friend Mr. Belmour.

'*Har.* O lud, Sir! not a word of that before my 'father—I wish you'd try, Sir, to get him to think 'of his affairs—

'*Cod.* Why, yes, I have instructions for that 'purpose. Mr. Quidnunc, I am instructed to ex-'pound the law to you.

'*Quid.* What, the law of nations?

'*Cod.* I am instructed, Sir, that you're a bank 'rupt——*Quasi bancus ruptus—banque route faire*—

'And my instructions say further, that you are 'summoned to appear before the commissioners to-'morrow—

'*Quid* That may be, Sir; but I can't go to-'morrow; and so I shall send 'em word—I am to 'be to-morrow at Slaughter's Coffee-house with a 'private committee, about business of great conse-'quence to the affairs of Europe.—

'*Cod.* Then, Sir, if you don't go, I must instruct 'you that you'll be guilty of a felony; it will be 'deem'd to be done *malo animo*—it is held so in the 'books—And what says the statute? By the 5th 'Geo. II. cap. 30. not surrendering or embezzeling 'is felony, without benefit of clergy.

'*Quid.* Ay!—you tell me news—

'*Cod.* Give me leave, Sir—I am instructed to ex-'pound the law to you—Felony is thus described in 'the books: '*Felonia*, saith Hotoman, *de verbis* '*feudalibus*, *significat capitale facinus*, a capital 'offence.

'*Quid.* You tell me news; you do indeed.

'*Cod.* It was so apprehended by the Goths and 'the Longobards. And what saith Sir Edward 'Coke? *Fieri debeat felleo animo.*

'*Quid.* You've told me news—I did not know it 'was felony; but if the Flanders mail should come 'in while I am there—I shall know nothing at all of 'it———

'*Cod.* But why should you be uneasy? *cui bono*, 'Mr. Quidnunc, *cui bono?*

'*Quid.* Not uneasy! If the Papists should beat the Protestants.

'*Cod.* But I tell you, they can get no advantage of us. The laws against the further growth of Popery will secure us—there are provisos in favour of Protestant purchasers under Papists—10th Geo. I. cap. 4. and 6th Geo. II. cap. 5.

'*Quid.* Ay!

'*Cod.* And besides, Popish recusants can't carry arms; so can have no right of conquest, *vi et armis*.

'*Quid.* That's true—that's true—I'm easier in my mind——

'*Cod.* To be sure, what are you uneasy about?—The Papists can have no claim to Silesia——

'*Quid.* Can't they?

'*Cod.* No, they can set up no claim—If the queen on her marriage had put all her lands into Hotchpot, then indeed—and it seemeth, saith Littleton, that this word *Hotchpot* is in English a pudding——

'*Quid.* You reason very clearly, Mr. Codicil, upon the rights of the powers at war; and so now, if you will, I am ready to talk a little of my affairs.

'*Cod.* Nor does the matter rest here; for how can she set up a claim, when she has made a conveyance to the house of Brandenburgh? The law, Mr. Quidnunc, is very severe against fraudulent conveyances.

'*Quid.* 'Sbodikins you have satisfied me——

'*Cod.* Why, therefore, then—if he will levy fines

'and suffer a common recovery, he can bequeath it 'as he likes in *feodum simplex*, provided he takes 'care to put it in *ses heres*.

'*Quid.* I'm heartily glad of it—So that with re-'gard to my effects——

'*Cod.* Why, then, suppose she was to bring it to 'a trial at bar—

'*Quid.* I say, with regard to the full disclosure of 'my effects—

'*Cod.* What wou'd she get by that?—it would go 'off upon a special pleading—and as to equity—

'*Quid.* Pray, must I now surrender my books 'and my pamphlets?

'*Cod.* What wou'd equity do for her? Equity 'can't relieve her; he might keep her at least 'twenty years before a master to settle the ac-'count—

'*Quid.* You have made me easy about the Pro-'testants in this war, you have indeed—So that 'with regard to my appearing before the commis-'sioners——

'*Cod.* And as to the ban of the empire, he may 'demur to that: for all tenures by knights-service 'are abolished; and the statute 12th Char. II. has 'declared all lands to be held under a common so-'cage.

'*Quid.* Pray now, Mr. Codicil, must not my 'creditors appear to prove their debts?

Cod. Why, therefore, then, if they're held in com-'mon socage, I submit it to the court—whether the 'empire can have any claim to knight's servise—

'They can't call to him for a single man for the 'wars—*unum hominem ad guerram*——For what is 'common socage?——*socagium idem est quod servi-* 'tium socæ—The service of the plough.

'*Quid.* I'm ready to attend 'em—But pray now, 'when my certificate is signed—it is of great con- 'sequence to me to know this——I say, Sir, when 'my certificate is signed, mayn't I then—Hey? '(*starting up*) Hey!——What do I hear?

'*Cod.* I apprehend—I humbly conceive, when 'your certificate is signed——'

Quid. 'Hold your tongue man'—Did not I hear the Gazette?

Newsman (within). Great news in the London Gazette?

Quid. Yes, yes, it is—it is the Gazette——Termagant, run you jade—(*Turns her out.*)——Harriet, fly, it is the Gazette—'(*Turns her out.*)'

'*Cod.* The law in that case, Mr. Quidnunc, *prima* '*facie*—

'*Quid.* I can't hear you—I have not time'—Ter- 'magant, run, 'make haste— [*Stamps violently.*

'*Cod.* I say, Sir, it is held in the books——

'*Quid.* I care for no books—I want the papers— ' [*Stamping.*

'*Cod.* Throughout all the books—Bo! the man 'is *non compos*; and his friends, instead of a com- 'mission of bankruptcy, shou'd take out a commis- 'sion of lunacy. ' [*Exit Codicil.*'

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. What do you keep such a bawling for? the newsman says as how the emperor of Mocco is dead.

Quid. The emperor of Morocco!

Ter. Yes, him.

Quid. My poor dear emperor of Morocco!

[*Bursts into tears.*

Ter. Ah, you old Don Quicksett!—Ma'am, Ma'am—Miss Harriet, go your ways into the next room, there's Mr. Belmour's man there; Mr. Belmour has sent you a billydore.——

'*Har.* Oh, Termagant, my heart is in an uproar '——I don't know what to say—Where is he? let 'me run to him this instant.' [*Exit Harriet.*

Quid. The emperor of Morocco had a regard for the balance of Europe—(*Sighs.*)—Well, well, come, come, give me the paper.

Ter. The newsman would not trust, because you're a bankrupper, and so I paid twopence-halfpenny for it.

Quid. Let's see—let's see—

Ter. Give me my money then—

[*Running from him.*

Quid. Give it me this instant, you jade——

[*After her.*

Ter. Give me my money, I say— [*From him.*

Quid. I'll teach you, I will, you baggage.—

[*After her.*

Ter. I won't part with it till I have the money.
[*From him.*

Quid. I'll give you no money, hussey. [*After her.*

Ter. Your daughter shall marry Mr. Belmour.
[*From him.*

Quid. I'll never accede to the treaty. [*After her.*

Ter. Go, you old fool. [*From him.*

Quid. You vile minx, worse than the whore of Babylon. [*After her.*

Ter. There, you old crack'd-brain'd-politic,—there's your paper for you.
[*Throws it down, and exit.*

Quid. (sitting down.) O Heavens!—I'm quite out of breath—A jade, to keep my news from me——What does it say, what does it say?—*(Reads very fast while opening the paper.)*—"Whereas a commis-"sion of bankrupt is awarded and issued forth "against Abraham Quidnunc, of the parish of St. "Martins in the Fields, upholsterer, dealer, and "chapman, the said bankrupt is hereby required to "surrender himself." Poh! what signifies this stuff? I don't mind myself, when the balance of power is concerned.—However, I shall be read of in the same paper, in the London Gazette, by the powers abroad, together with the Pope, and the French king, and the Mogul, and all of 'em—Good, good, very good—Here's a pow'r of news—Let me see—(*Reads*)—"Letters from the vice-admiral, "dated Tyger, off Calcutta."—*(Mutters to himself very eagerly.)*—Odd's heart, those baggages will interrupt me, I hear their tongue's a-going, click,

clack, clack: I'll run into my closet, and lock myself up.—A vixen!—a trollop!—to want money from me—when I may have occasion to buy The State of the Sinking Fund, or Faction Detected, or The Barrier Treaty,—or—and besides, how could the jade tell but to-morrow we may have a Gazette extraordinary? [*Exit.*

THE END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I. *The Upholsterer's House.*

Enter QUIDNUNC.

QUID.

WHERE, where, where is he?——Where's Mr. Pamphlet?—Mr. Pamphlet!—Termagant, Mr. a——a—Termagant, Harriet, Termagant, you vile minx, you saucy—

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. Here's a racket indeed!

Quid. Where's Mr. Pamphlet? You baggage, if he's gone———

Ter. Did not I intimidate that he's in the next room?—Why, sure the man's out of his wits.

Quid. Show him in here then—I would not miss seeing him for the discovery of the north-east passage.

Ter. Go, you old gemini gomini of a politic.

[*Exit Ter.*

Quid. Show him in, I say—I had rather see him than the 'whole state of the peace at Utrecht, or the 'Paris-a-la-main, or the' votes, or the minutes, or —(*here he comes*)—the best political writer of the age.

Enter PAMPHLET, *in a surtout coat*, &c.

Quid. Mr. Pamphlet, I am heartily glad to see you;—'as glad as if you were an express from the 'Groyn, or from Berlin, or Zell, or from Calcut-'ta over-land, or from—'

Pam. Mr. Quidnunc, your servant—I'm come from a place of great importance.—

Quid. Look ye there now!—Well, where, where?

Pam. Are we alone?

Quid. Stay, stay, till I shut the door—Now, now, where do you come from?

Pam. From the court of requests.

[*Laying aside his surtout coat.*

Quid. The court of requests (*whispers*), are they up?

Pam. Hot work.—

Quid. Debates arising, may be?

Pam. Yes, and like to sit late.

Quid. What are they upon?

Pam. Can't say.

Quid. What carried you thither?

Pam. I went in hopes of being taken up.

Quid. Look ye there now. [*Shaking his head.*

Pam. I've been aiming at it these three years.

Quid. Indeed! [*Staring at him.*

Pam. Indeed——Sedition is the only thing an author can live by now——Time has been I could turn a penny by an earthquake, or live upon a jail-distemper, or dine upon a bloody murder!——but now that's all over,—nothing will do now but roasting a

minister—or telling the people that they are ruined—The people of England are never so happy as when you tell 'em they are ruined.

Quid. Yes, but they an't ruined—I have a scheme for paying off the national debt.

Pam. Let's see, let's see—*(Puts on his spectacles)*—Well enough! well imagined!—a new thought this—I must make this my own—*(Aside.)*—Silly, futile, absurd—abominable; this will never do—I'll put it in my pocket, and read it over in the morning for you—Now, look you here—I'll show you a scheme—*(Rummaging his pockets.)*—No, that's not it—that's my conduct of the ministry, by a country gentleman—I prov'd the nation undone here: this sold hugely—And here now, here's my answer to it, by a noble lord—this did not move among the trade.

Quid. What, do you write on both sides?

Pam. Yes, both sides—I've two hands, Mr. Quidnunc—Always impartial, *ambo dexter.*—Now here, here's my dedication to a great man——touch'd twenty for this—and here——here's my libel upon him—

Quid. What, after being oblig'd to him?

Pam. Yes, for that reason—It excites curiosity—White-wash and blacking-ball, Mr. Quidnunc! *in utrumque paratus*——no thriving without it.

Quid. What have you here in this pocket?

[*Prying eagerly.*

Pam. That's my account with Jacob Zorobabel the broker, for writing paragraphs to raise or tum-

ble the stocks, or the price of lottery-tickets, according to his purposes.

Quid. Ay; how do you do that?

Pam. As thus—To-day the Protestant interest declines, Madrass is taken, and England's undone; then all the long faces in the alley look as dismal as a blank; and so Jacob buys away, and thrives upon our ruin.—Then to-morrow we're all alive and merry again; Pondicherry's taken; a certain northern potentate will shortly strike a blow to astonish all Europe: and then every true-born Englishman is willing to buy a lottery-ticket for twenty or thirty shillings more than its worth; so Jacob sells away, and reaps the fruit of our success.

Quid. What! will the people believe that now?

Pam. Believe it!—believe any thing—No swallow like a true-born Englishman's—A man in a quart-bottle, or a victory, 'tis all one to them—they give a gulp—and down it goes—glib, glib—

Quid. Yes; but they an't at the bottom of things.

Pam. No, not they; they dabble a little, but can't dive—

Quid. Pray now, Mr. Pamphlet, what do you think of our situation?

Pam. Bad, Sir, bad—And how can it be better?—the people in power never send to me—never consult me—it must be bad—Now here, here—(*Goes to his loose coat*)—here's a manuscript!—this will do the business, a master-piece!—I shall be taken up for this——

Quid. Shall ye?

Pam. As sure as a gun I shall—I know the bookseller's a rogue, and will give me up.

Quid. But pray now, what shall you get by being taken up?

Pam. I'll tell you—*(Whispers)*—in order to make me hold my tongue.

Quid. Ay, but you won't hold your tongue for all that.

Pam. Poh, poh! not a jot of that—abuse 'em the next day.

Quid. Well, well, I wish you success—But do you hear no news? have you seen the Gazette?

Pam. Yes, I've seen that——Great news, Mr. Quidnunc——But hark ye—*(Whispers)*——and kiss hands next week.

Quid. Aye!
Pam. Certain.
Quid. Nothing permanent in this world.—
Pam. All is vanity.—
Quid. Ups and downs.—
Pam. Ins and outs.—
Quid. Wheels within wheels.—
Pam. No smoke without fire.—
Quid. All's well that ends well.
Pam. It will last our time.
Quid. Whoever lives to see it, will know more of the matter.
Pam. Time will tell all.

In deep thought without looking at each other.

Quid. Ay, we must leave all to the determination of time. Mr. Pamphlet, I'm heartily oblig'd to you

for this visit—I love you better than any man in England.

Pam. And for my part, Mr. Quidnunc—I love you better than I do England itself.

Quid. That's kind, that's kind—there's nothing I would not do, Mr. Pamphlet, to serve you.

Pam. Mr. Quidnunc, I know you're a man of integrity and honour—I know you are—and now since we have open'd our hearts, there is a thing, Mr. Quidnunc, in which you can serve me—You know, Sir, this is in the fulness of our hearts—you know you have my note for a trifle—Hard dealing with assignees—Now, could not you, to serve a friend—could not you throw that note into the fire?

Quid. Hey! but would that be honest?

Pam. Leave that to me; a refin'd stroke of policy—Papers have been destroyed in all governments.

Quid. So they have—It shall be done; it will be political; it will indeed—Pray now, Mr. Pamphlet, what do you take to be the true political balance of power?

Pam. What do I take to be the balance of power?

Quid. Ay, the balance of power!

Pam. The balance of power—what do I take to be the balance of power—the balance of power—(*Shuts his eyes*) what do I take to be the balance of power?

Quid. The balance of power I take to be, when the court of aldermen sits.

Pam. No, no—

Quid. Yes, yes—

Pam. No, no; the balance of power is when the foundations of government and the superstructures are natural.

Quid. How d'ye mean natural?

Pam. Prithee be quiet, man—This is the language—The balance of power is—when superstructures are reduc'd to proper balances, or when the balances are not reduc'd to unnatural superstructures.

Quid. Poh, poh!——I tell you it is when the fortifications of Dunkirk are demolish'd.

Pam. But I tell you, Mr. Quidnunc——
Quid. I say, Mr. Pamphlet—
Pam. Hear me, Mr. Quidnunc—
Quid. Give me leave, Mr. Pamphlet—
Pam. I must observe, Sir—
Quid. I am convinc'd, Sir—
Pam. That the balance of power—
Quid. That the fortifications of Dunkirk—
Pam. Depends upon the balances and superstructures—
Quid. Constitute the true political equilibrium—
Pam. Nor will I converse with a man—
Quid. And, Sir, I never desire to see your face—
Pam. Of such anti-constitutional principles—

Both in a passion.

Quid. Nor the face of any man who is such a Frenchman in his heart, and has such notions of the balance of power. [*Exeunt.*

QUIDNUNC *re-enters.*

—Ay, I've found him out—such abominable principles! I never desire to converse with any man of his notions—no, never while I live———

Re-enter PAMPHLET.

Pam. Mr. Quidnunc, one word with you, if you please.

Quid. Sir, I never desire to see your face—

Pam. My property, Mr. Quidnunc—I shan't leave my property in the house of a bankrupt——— *(Twisting his handkerchief round his arm)*—A silly, empty, incomprehensible blockhead!

Quid. Blockhead! Mr. Pamphlet—

Pam. A blockhead to use me thus, when I have you so much in my power—

Quid. In your power!

Pam. In my power, Sir—It's in my power to hang you.

Quid. To hang me!

Pam. Yes, Sir, to hang you—*(Drawing on his coat.)*—Did not you propose but this moment, did not you desire me to combine and confederate to burn a note, and defraud your creditors?

Quid. I desire it!

Pam. Yes, Mr. Quidnunc; but I shall detect you to the world. I'll give your character—You shall have a sixpenny touch next week.

Flebit et insignis tota cantabitur urbe.

[*Exit Pamphlet.*

Quid. Mercy on me!—there's the effect of his anti-constitutional principles—The spirit of his whole party; I never desire to exchange another word with him.

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. Here's a pother indeed!—Did you call me?

Quid. No, you trollop, no.—

Ter. Will you go to bed?

Quid. No, no, no, no—I tell you no.

Ter. Better to go to rest, Sir. I heard a doctor of physic say, as how, when a man is past his grand crime—what the deuce makes me forgot my word? ——his grand crime-hysteric; nothing is so good against indiscompositions as rest taken in its prudish natalibus.

Quid. Hold your prating—I'll not go to bed, I'll step to my brother Feeble;——I want to have some talk with him, and I'll go to him directly.

[*Exit Quid.*

Ter. Go thy ways for an old Hocus-pocus of a newsmonger——You'll have good luck if you find your daughter here when you come back; Mr. Belmour will be here in the interim; and if he does not carry her off, why then I shall think him a mere shilly-shally feller; and by my troth I shall think him as bad a politishing as yourself. (*Exit Termagant.*) 'Well, as I live and breathe, I wonders 'what the dickens the man sees in these newspapers, 'to be for ever toxicated with them—Let me see 'one of them to try if I can vestigate any thing—

[*Takes the newspaper and reads.*

' " Yesterday at noon, arrived at his lodgings in ' Pall-mall, John Stukely, Esq. for the remainder ' of the winter-season."

' Where the dewill has the man been?——Who ' knows him, or cares a minikin-pin about him!— ' He may go to Jericho for what I cares—

' " The same day Mr. William Tabby, an emi- ' nent man-milliner, was married to Miss Jenkins, ' daughter of Mr. Jenkins, a considerable haber- ' dasher in Bear-binder-lane."—

' What the dickens is this to me?—Can't Miss ' Jenkins and her man-milliner go to bed, and hold ' their tongues?—Why must they kiss and tell?

' " By advices from Violenna"—This is policies ' now (*reads to herself,*)—" and promises a general ' peace."—Why, can't that make the old curmud- ' geon happy?

' " By letters from Paris"—This is more policies ' — (*reads to herself,*) " and all seems tending to a ' general rupture."—What the dewill does the fel- ' ler mean?—Did not he tell me this moment there ' was to be peace, and now its bloody news again, ' —To go to tell me such an impudent lie to my ' face!

' " At the academy in Essex-street, grown people ' are taught to dance."

' Grown people are taught to dance—I likes that ' well enough—I should like to be betterer in my ' dancing—I likes the figerre of a minute as well as ' a figerre in speech—(*Dances and sings.*)—But such ' trumpery as the news is, with kings, and cheese-

'mongers and bishops, and highwaymen, and ladies 'prayer-books, and lap-dogs, and the domedary 'and camomile, and ambassadors, and hair-cutters, 'all higgledy-piggledy together.——As I hope for 'marcy, I'll never read another paper—and I wishes 'Old Quidnunc wou'd do the same.——If the man 'would do as I do, there would be some sense in it '—if, instead of his politics, he would manure his 'mind like me, and read good altars, and improve 'himself in fine langidge, and bombaſt, and polite 'accollishments. [*Exit singing.*

SCENE II.—*The Street.*

'*Enter* BELMOUR, ROVEWELL, *and* BRISK, *in liquor.*

'*Bel.* Women ever were, and ever will be, fan-'tastic beings; vain, capricious, and fond of mis-'chief.

'*Br.* Well argued, Master.

'*Rove.* (*sings.*)

'Deceit is in every woman;
'But none in a bumper can be, my brave boys,
'But none in a bumper can be.

'*Bel.* To be insulted thus, with such a contemp-'tuous answer to a message of such tender import! 'She might, methinks, at least have treated me 'with good manners, if not with a more grateful 'return.

'*Rove.* Split her manners, let's go and drink 't'other bumper, to drown sorrow.

'*Bel.* I'll shake off her fetters—I will, Brisk, this very night, I will—

'*Br.* That's right, Master;—and let her know we have found her out: and, as the poet says,

'She that will not when she may,
'When she will, she shall have nay—Master.

'*Bel.* Very true, Brisk, very true;—the ingratitude of it touches me to the quick—My dear Rovewell, only come and see me take a final leave—

'*Rove.* No truly, not I; none of your virtuous minxes for me. I'll set you down there, if you've a mind to play the fool—I know she'll melt you with a tear; and make a puppy of you with a smile; and so I'll not be a witness to it.

'*Bel.* You're quite mistaken, I assure you—— You'll see me most manfully upbraid her with her ingratitude, and with more joy than a fugitive galley-slave escape from the oar to which I have been chain'd.

'*Br.* Master, Master, now's our time; for look, by the glimmering of yonder lamp, who comes along by the wall there—

'*Bel.* Her father, by all that's lucky.—My dear Rovewell, let's drive off.

'*Rove.* I'll speak to him for you, man—

'*Bel.* Not for the world—Prithee come along.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. *Changes to the street.*

Enter QUIDNUNC, *with a dark lanthorn.*

Quid. If the Grand Turk should actually commence open hostility, and the house-dog Tartars make a diversion upon the frontiers, why then, 'tis my opinion—time will discover to us a great deal more of the matter.

Watch. (*within.*) Paſt eleven o'clock, a cloudy night.

Quid. Hey! past eleven o'clock—'Sbodikins, my brother Feeble will be gone to bed—but he shan't sleep till I have some chat with him. Hark ye, watchman, watchman!

Enter WATCHMAN.

Watch. Call, Master?

Quid. Ay, step hither, step hither; have you heard any news?

Watch. News, Maſter!

Quid. Ay, about the Prussians or the Russians?

Watch. Russians, Master!

Quid. Yes; or the movements in Pomerania?

Watch. La, Master, I know nothing—Poor gentleman! (*pointing to his head.*)—Good night to you, Master.—Past eleven o'clock. [*Exit Watchman.*

Quid. That man, now, has a place under the government, and he won't speak. But I'm losing time —[*Knocks at the door.*]—Hazy weather—[*Looking up.*] The wind's fixt in that quarter, and we shan't

have any mails this week to come—Come about, good wind, do, come about.

Enter a SERVANT-MAID.

Maid. La, Sir, is it you?

Quid. Is your master at home, child?

Maid. Gone to-bed, Sir.

Quid. Well, well, I'll step up to him.

Maid. Must not disturb him for the world, Sir—

Quid. Business of the utmost importance.

Maid. Pray consider, Sir, my master an't well.

Quid. Prithee be quiet, woman; I must see him.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*A room in* FEEBLE'S *house.*

Enter FEEBLE *in his night-gown.*

Feeb. I was just stepping in to bed—Bless my heart, what can this man want?—I know his voice,—I hope no new misfortune brings him at this hour.

Quid. Hold your tongue, you foolish hussy—he'll be glad to see me.—Brother Feeble, brother Feeble?

[*Within.*

Enter QUIDNUNC.

Quid. Brother Feeble, I give you joy—The nabob's demolish'd—(*Sings.*) Britons strike home, revenge, &c.

Feeb. Lack-a-day, Mr. Quidnunc, how can you serve me thus?

Quid. Suraja Dowla is no more.

Feeb. Poor man! he's stark-staring mad.

Quid. Our men diverted themselves with killing their bullocks and their camels, till they dislodged the enemy from the octagon, and the counterscarp, and the bung-lo.—

Feeb. I'll hear the rest to-morrow morning—Oh! I'm ready to die.

Quid. Odsheart man, be of good cheer—the new nabob, Jaffier Ally Cawn, has acceded to a treaty; and the English Company have got all their rights in the Phiemand and the Hushbulhoorums.

Feeb. But dear heart, Mr. Quidnunc, why am I to be disturb'd for this?

Quid. We had but two seapoys killed, three chokeys, four gaul-walls, and two zemidars.—(*Sings*) Britons never shall be slaves!

Feeb. Would not to-morrow morning do as well for this?

Quid. Light up your windows, man; light up your windows. Chandernagore is taken.

Feeb. Well, well, I'm glad of it—Good night.

[*Going.*

Quid. Here; here's the Gazette.——

Feeb. Oh! I shall certainly faint. [*Sits down.*

Quid. Ay, ay, sit down, and I'll read it to you. (*Reads.*) Nay, don't run away—I've more news to tell you!—there's an account from Williamsburgh in America—The superintendant of Indian affairs—

Feeb. Dear Sir, dear Sir— [*Avoiding him.*

Quid. He has settled matters with the Cherokees—

[*Following him*

Feeb. Enough, enough— [*From him.*

Quid. In the same manner he did before with the Catabaws. [*After him.*

Feeb. Well, well, your servant.—— [*From him.*

Quid. So that the back inhabitants—— [*After him.*

Feeb. I wish you would let me be a quiet inhabitant in my own house.—

Quid. So that the back inhabitants will now be secur'd by the Cherokees and Catabaws.—

Feeb. You'd better go home, and think of appearing before the commissioners.—

Quid. Go home! no, no, I'll go and talk the matter over at our coffee-house.—

Feeb. Do so, do so.

Quid. (*returning.*) Mr. Feeble—I had a dispute about the balance of power—pray now can you tell—

Feeb. I know nothing of the matter——

Quid. Well, another time will do for that—I have a great deal to say about that—(*Going, returns.*) Right, I had like to have forgot, there's an erratum in the last Gazette——

Feeb. With all my heart——

Quid. Page 3, line 1st, col. 1st and 3d, for *bombs* read *booms*.

Feeb. Read what you will—

Quid. Nay, but that alters the sense, you know—Well, now your servant. If I hear any more news, I'll come and tell you.—

Feeb. For Heaven's sake no more—

Quid. I'll be with you before you're out of your first sleep——

Feeb. Good-night, good-night—— [*Runs off.*

Quid. I forgot to tell you—the emperor of Morocco is dead, (*Bawling after him.*) So——now I've made him happy—I'll go and knock up my friend Razor, and make him happy too—and then I'll go and see if any body is up at the coffee-houses—and make them all happy there too. [*Exit Quidnunc.*

SCENE V. A Street. A shabby House, with a Barber's Pole up, and candles burning on the outside.

Enter QUIDNUNC, *with a dark lanthorn.*

Quid. Ah, friend Razor!—he has a great respect for a rejoicing night—Who knows but he has heard some more particulars.—

RAZOR, *looking out at the window.*

Raz. Anan!

Quid. Friend Razor.

Raz. My Master Quidnunc! I'm rejoicing for the news—will you partake of a pipe?—I'll open the door.

Quid. Not now, friend Razor.

Raz. I've something to tell you—I'll come down.

Quid. This may be worth staying for——What can he have heard?

Enter RAZOR, *a pipe in his mouth, and a tankard in his hand.*

Raz. Say, here's to you, Master Quidnunc.

Quid. What have you heard? What have you heard?

Raz. The consumers of oats are to meet next week.

Quid. Those consumers of oats have been meeting any time these ten years to my knowledge, and I never cou'd find what they are about.

Raz. Things an't right, I fear—its enough to put down a body's spirits— [*Drinks.*

Quid. No, nothing to fear—I can tell you some good news—a certain great potentate has not heard high-mass the Lord knows when.

Raz. That puts a body in spirits again. (*Drinks*) Here drink, No wooden shoes.

Quid. With all my heart—(*Drinks.*) Good liquor this, Master Razor, of a cold night.

Raz. Yes, I put a quartern of British brandy in my beer—whu!—Do you know what a rebel my wife is?

Quid. A rebel!

Raz. Ay, a rebel—I earned nineteen-pence half-penny to-day, and she wanted to lay out all that great sum upon the children—whu—but I bought those candles for the good of my country, to rejoice with, as a body may say—a little Virginy for my pipe, and this sup of hot—whu——

Quid. Ay, you're an honest man: and if every body did like you and me, what a nation we shou'd be!—

Raz. Ay, very true— [*Shakes his head.*

Quid. I can give you the Gazette to read.

Raz. Can you! a thousand thanks——I'll take it home to you when I have done.—

[*Drinks, and staggers.*

Quid. Friend Razor, you begin to be a little in for't.

Raz. Yes, I have a whirligigg of a head—but a body shou'd get drunk sometimes for the good of one's country.

Quid. Well, I shall be at home in half an hour!—Hark ye.

Raz. ——Anan!

Quid. I have made a rare discovery—Florida will be able to supply Jamaica with peat for their winter's firing. I had it from a deep politician.

Raz. Ay! I am glad the poor people of Jamaica will have Florida peat to burn.— [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*The Upholsterer's House*

Enter BELMOUR *and* HARRIET.

Har. Mr. Belmour, pray Sir—I desire, Sir, you'll not follow me from room to room.

Bel. Indulge me but a moment.

Har. No, Mr. Belmour, I've seen too much of your temper—I'm touch'd beyond all enduring at your unmanly treatment.

Bel. Unmanly, Madam?

Har. Unmanly, Sir, to presume upon the misfortunes of my family, and insult me with the formidable menaces that, "Truly you have done; you'll be no more a slave to me."—Oh fie, Mr. Belmour, I did not think a gentleman capable of it.

Bel. But you won't consider.

Har. Sir, I wou'd have Mr. Belmour understand, that though my father's circumstances are embarass'd,

I have still an uncle, who can, and will, place me in a state of affluence; and then, Sir, your declarations—

Bel. My dearest Harriet, they were but hasty words; let me now intreat you suffer me to convey you hence, far from your father's roof, where we may at length enjoy that happiness, of which we have long cherish'd the lov'd idea——What say you, Harriet?

Har. I don't know what to say——'my heart's at 'my lips.—Why don't you take me then?'

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. Undone, undone! I'm all over in a flustration—old Jimini Gomini's coming.

Har. O lud, what is to be done now?

Ter. The devil! what can be done? I have it—don't flustrate yourself—I'll find some nonsence news for him—away with you both into that room. Quick, quick. [*Exeunt Bel. and Har.*

Let me see—have I nothing in my pocket for the old hocus pocus to read? Psha! that's Mr. Belmour's letter to Miss Harriet——I envelop'd that secret for all pains to purvent me.—Old Politic must not have an idear of that business——Stay, stay, is there ne'er an old trumpery newspaper?—this will do—(*Puts it in her pocket.*) Now let the Gazette of a fellow come as soon as he will.

Enter QUIDNUNC.

Quid. Fie upon it——fie upon it!—all the coffee-houses shut up—Where is my Salmon's gazetteer

and my map of the world?—in that room, I fancy—I won't sleep till I know the geography of all these places. [*Going.*

Ter. Sir, Sir, Sir!

Quid. What's the matter?

Ter. Here has been Mr.——he with the odd name.—

'*Quid.* Mr. D—that writes the pretty verses upon all public occasions——

'*Ter.* Ay, Mr. Reptile—the same'—He says as how there are some assays of his in this paper—— (*Searches her pockets.*) and he desires you will give your idear of them.

Quid. That I will—let me see!——

Ter. The deuce fetch it—here is something distintangles in my pocket—there it is—(*Gives the paper, and drops the letter.*) Pray amuse it before you go to bed—or had not you better go and read it in bed?—

Quid. No, I'll read it here.——

Ter. Do so—he'll call in the morning.—I'll get him to bed, I warrant me; and then Miss Harriet, may elope as fast as she will.—— [*Exit.*

Quid. Hey! this is an old newspaper, I see.—— What's this? (*Takes up the letter.*) Here may be some news.——"To Miss Harriet Quidnunc."—Let me see—(*Reads.*)

"My dearest Harriet,

"Why will you keep me in a state of suspence? I "have given you every proof of the sincerest con- "stancy and love. Surely then, now that you see "your father's obstinacy, you may determine to

" consult your own happiness; if you will permit
" me to wait on you this evening, I will convey you
" to a family, who will take the tenderest care of
" your person, till you resign it to the arms of

" Your eternal admirer,

" Belmour."

So, so, here's policy detected—Why Harriet, daughter! Harriet!—She has not made her escape, I hope—So Madam—

Enter HARRIET *and* BELMOUR.

Hey, the enemy in our camp!

Har. Mr. Belmour is no enemy, Sir.—

Quid. No! What does he lurk in my house for?

Bel. Sir, my designs are honourable; you see, Sir, I am above concealing myself.

Quid. Ay, thanks to Termagant, or I shou'd have been undermined here by you.—

Ter. (*Looking in.*) What the devil is here to do now?—I am all over in a quandery.

Quid. Now, Madam, an't you a false girl—an undutiful child?—But I can get intelligence, you see—Termagant is my friend, and if it had not been for her——

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. Oh my stars and garters! here's such a piece of work—What shall I do?—My poor dear Miss Harriet— [*Cries bitterly.*

Quid. What, is there any more news! What has happen'd now?

Ter. Oh Madam, Madam, forgive me, my dear Ma'am——I did not do it purpose—I did not; as I hope for mercy, I did not.

Quid. Is the woman crazy?

Ter. I did not intend to give it him—I would have seen him gibbeted first.—I found the letter in your bed-chamber—I knew it was the same I deliver'd to you—and my curiosity did make me peep into it. Says my curiosity, "Now, Termagant, you "may gratify yourself by finding out the contents "of that letter, which you have so violent an itch-"ing for."—My curiosity did say so—And then I own my respect for you did say to me, "Hussy, how "dare you meddle with what does not belong to "you? Keep your distance, and let your mistress's "secreets alone." And then upon that, in comes my curiosity again, "Read it I tell you, Termagant; "a woman of spirit should know every thing." "Let it alone, you jade," says my respect, it is as "much as your place is worth." "What significa-"tion's a place with an old bankrupper?" says my curiosity; "there's more places than one; and so "read it, I tell you, Termagant."—I did read it, what could I do?—Heav'n help me—I did read it—I don't go to deny it, I don't—I don't—I don't—

[*Crying very bitterly.*

Quid. And I have read it too; don't keep such an uproar, woman.

'*Ter.* And after I had read it, thinks me, I'll 'give this to my mistress again, and her geremano-'cus of a father shall never see it—And so, as my

'ill stars would have it, as I was giving him a news-'paper, I run my hand into the lion's mouth.

['*Crying.*

'*Bel.* What an unlucky jade she has been. [*Aside.*

'*Har.* Well, there's no harm done, Termagant; 'for I don't want to deceive my father.

Quid. 'Yes, but there is harm done.' (*Knocking.* Hey, what's all this knocking?—Step and see, Termagant.

Ter. Yes, Sir—— [*Exit.*

Quid. A waiter from the coffee-house, mayhap, with some news——You shall go to the round-house, friend,—(*To Belmour.*)—I'll carry you there myself; and who knows but I may meet a parliament man in the round-house to tell him some politics?

Enter ROVEWELL.

Rove. But I say I will come in; my friend shan't be murder'd amongst you——

Bel. 'Sdeath Rovewell! what brings you here?

Rove. I have been waiting in a hackney-coach for you these two hours; and split me but I was afraid they had smother'd you between two feather-beds.

Enter TERMAGANT.

Ter. More misfortunes—here comes the watch.

Quid. The best news I ever heard.

Enter WATCHMEN.

Quid. Here, thieves, robbery, murder, I charge 'em both; take 'em directly.

Watch. Stand and deliver in the king's name; seize 'em—knock 'em down——

Bel. Don't frighten the lady—here's my sword—I surrender.

Rove. You scoundrels—Stand off, rascals——

Watch. Down with him—down with him. [*Fight.*

Enter RAZOR, *with the Gazette in his hand.*

Raz. What, a fray at my Master Quidnunc's—knock him down—knock him down——

[*Folds up the Gazette, puts himself in a boxing attitude, and fights with the watchmen.*]

Quid. That's right—hold him fast——

[*Watchmen seize Rovewell.*

Rove. You have overpower'd me, you rascals.——

Ter. I believe as sure as any thing, as how he's a highwayman, and as how it was he that robb'd the mail.

Quid. What! rob the mail, and stop all the news—Search him—search him—he may have the letters belonging to the mail in his pockets now—Ay, here's one letter—"To Mr. Abraham Quidnunc."—Let's see what it is——"Your dutiful son, John Quidnunc."

Rove. That's my name, and Rovewell was but assumed.

Quid. What, and am I your father?

Raz. (*Looks at him.*) Oh my dear Sir, (*Embraces him and powders him all over*) 'tis he sure enough—I remember the mole on his cheek—I shaved his first beard.

Quid. Just returned from the West Indies, I suppose?

Rove. Yes, Sir; the owner of a rich plantation.

Quid. What, by studying politics?

Rove. By a rich planter's widow; and I have now fortune enough to make you happy in your old age.

Raz. And I hope I shall shave him again.

Rove. So thou shalt, honest Razor—In the mean time let me intreat you bestow my sister upon my friend Belmour here.

Quid. He may take her as soon as he pleases—'twill make an excellent paragraph in the newspapers.

Ter. There, Madam, calcine your person to him.

Quid. What are the Spaniards doing in the bay of Honduras?

Rove. Truce with politics for the present, if you please, Sir—We'll think of our own affairs first—before we concern ourselves about the balance of power.

Raz. With all my heart; I'm rare happy.

Come, Mr. Quidnunc, now with news ha' done,
Bless'd in your wealth, your daughter and your son;
May discord cease, faction no more be seen;
Be high and low for country, king and queen.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA